

## THE STRIKE.

At this writing it is conceded that the great strike is practically at an end. True, strikers are holding out in some localities, and no arrangement has been effected for the general return of the men to their former places; but no one will claim that there is any hope of the accomplishment of the general purposes of the strike. While this is true, it has taught lessons that nothing else could have taught. Thousands of people to-day see the absolute necessity of government ownership and operation of railroads who never saw it before. Many republican papers, even, are advocating this Populist doctrine. Another of the lessons that has been taught has been of especial service to railroad employees themselves. They have seen that in a contest of labor against the encroachments of capital the republican and democratic parties are on the side of capital, and the press of both parties has been arrayed solidly against the interests of labor. They have seen that their only political friends in this country to-day are the Populists. The strike, therefore, has not been entirely barren of good results.

It may not be amiss at this time to briefly review the causes and events of the strike with respect to their bearing upon the future.

The original strike at Pullman was in consequence of a reduction of wages of employees to a point that rendered it impossible for them to subsist upon the proceeds of their labor. This reduction was not accompanied by any corresponding reduction of the exorbitant rents charged employees by the Pullman company, or by a reduction of any of the ordinary expenses of living in the town. The conditions were simply rendered intolerable and the absolute refusal of the company to redress the grievances of the men, or to submit the differences to arbitration induced the men to strike. After long and repeated and unsuccessful efforts to secure arbitration the American Railway Union decided to take up the cause of the Pullman workmen. The first efforts of the union were directed toward securing an arbitration, but were unavailing. A sympathetic strike by the union was, therefore, decided upon, in which the members of that organization simply asked of the railroad companies that they detach the Pullman cars from the trains until such time as the Pullman company should agree to submit to arbitration or deal fairly with its employees. This the railroad companies refused to do, and thereby made the cause of the Pullman company their own. The moment the contest took this form, the Pullman company was out of it altogether. The fight became at once a fight of the railroads and the American Railway Union. The managers of the several railroads established headquarters at Chicago and were in constant consultation. They enlisted the press of the republican and democratic parties solidly in their support; and one of the methods adopted to

the injury of the cause of labor was the constant and persistent misrepresentation of their claims and of their acts. Bums and hoodlums were employed by the railroad managers to incite riots and commit lawless acts, which the press at once attributed to the strikers in order to create prejudice against them in the minds of the people. These lawless acts were also designed to afford a pretext for police and military interference, and the promptness with which this was secured on demand of the corporations has been observed by everyone. It has become apparent in this contest that in any difference between capital and labor the courts and all the civil and military authorities are at the service of organized capital. Labor has no right that capital or its allies are bound to respect.

In all the cases that have been brought into the courts against the railroad corporations under the interstate commerce law the corporations have won. One after another of the provisions of the law have been found unconstitutional and the companies have suffered no restraints or limitations in their usurpations. At last, however, the courts have succeeded in finding a provision of the law that is not unconstitutional. It is a provision under which railroad employees may be apprehended for interference with interstate commerce. As the men affected in this case are poor men, there is no likelihood of there being any constitutional bar to their punishment discovered. Laws are made now-a-days to shield men of wealth—not poor men; and the interstate commerce law is no exception to the rule. Neither that or the so-called Sherman anti-trust law were ever designed to operate against the interests of organized capital. They were designed solely as covers for legislation by which organized capital should be enabled to make further conquests over labor. We cannot better state the facts in relation to this subject than by quoting the language of a correspondent, a lawyer of ability and of large experience and wide observation in an eastern state. In the course of a recent private letter, he says:

Now, remember! John H. Reagan, then member of congress from Texas, for four years vainly urged the passage of his interstate commerce bill. Then came the great South-Western railroad strike. Gould and his gang of genuine "anarchists" at once saw their opportunity to seize upon a piece of national legislation ostensibly for the benefit of the people (when every one knows that a "dog's tail can't wag the dog" and a railroad dog-tail government can't wag a railroad dog); that gang, while contemplating the temporary advantage it had over the poor firemen and switchmen, while railroad King Arthur's "aristocrats of high-priced labor," the engineers stood aloof and allowed the plutocracy to crush Martin Iron's heroes; also comprehended Ricardo's "Iron Law of Wages," and that in time "that law would bring all wages to a common level;" and they looked forward until yesterday and saw what use the interstate commerce could be put to when the inevitable day of general organization of laborers should come.

Right after that South-Western strike Plutocrat Senator Colwell introduced in the house of representatives what assumed to be Reagan's bill. . . . It passed, and short-sighted American bipeds were happy!

Right then, in private talks and in public I foretold just what and only what that sham law was intended for—simply to provide the military power of the United States government to crush organized labor.

Plutocracy has been terribly in earnest ever since 1877, but never more so than now. It realizes just what the masses, too, ought to realize—that there is not a moment to lose to crush American liberty or save it.

And nothing stands in the way of saving it but party idolatry. Let the people open their eyes to the truth, forsake their party idolatry, and strike at the ballot box for liberty, and the cause will be won. Plutocracy has the wealth and the official station to-day, but it has not the numbers to sustain its supremacy, unless the masses, in their ignorance and their superstition, vote for their own enslavement.

## PEOPLE CAN NOT BE FOOLED WITH SUCH STUFF.

Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge, but a fool layeth open his folly.—Proverbs 13-16.

One of the good results of the strike will be to show the foolishness and impracticability of a lot of the socialistic "co-operation" stuff that has been poured out in theories by some of our preachers and politicians.

The town of Pullman came as near carrying into execution the communistic paternal government theories of Bellamy as possible.—Emporia Gazette.

The above are the opening paragraphs of a screed of the character of which they are a fair sample. There is not in Pullman one single element of Bellamyism, socialism, communism or co-operation, and there never has been. The land, the shops, the dwellings, the water-works, the gas-works and even the churches are the property of the Pullman company. Every workingman in the town, outside of the proprietors, is a renter, and pays ceaseless tribute to the company. Mr. Pullman himself states that the men pay to the company an average rental of \$3 a room per month. In addition to this they have to pay water and gas rents, and they enjoy no privilege that they do not pay for. There is also that other iniquity, the curse of every workingman where it exists—the company store, at which the employees must make their purchases of the necessities of life, and allow for them prices largely in excess of those for the same class of goods elsewhere. When pay-day comes the company collector accompanies the company paymaster. From each man's wages are deducted his house rent, water rent, gas bill, company store bill, and other *et ceteras*, and if he is fortunate enough to have a balance due him he receives a check for it.

The Chicago Times of July 12 has a *fac simile* of a check given to E. Edwards for balance due him, after the usual deductions, for two weeks' work. The balance in this case is just 8 cents. Many similar checks have been seen by citizens of Chicago. In many instances the workmen came out in debt and got no check at all. The above paragraphs taken from an article in the Emporia Gazette, the whole of which is of like tenor, afford a fair sample of the honesty and fairness of the average re-

publican editor. This town of Pullman not only possesses not a solitary element of Bellamyism, socialism, communism or co-operation, or anything that bears the remotest semblance to them, but, on the other hand, it affords one of the very worst examples of the practical workings of capitalism.

How do these systems differ? Under either a nationalistic, a socialistic, a communistic or co-operative system there would be no private ownership of the means of production. Under each there would be a community of interest, equal opportunities for all and equal reward for equal labor. There would be no rents and no class distinctions. Co-operation implies profit-sharing, and it would be a bold deceiver who would dare say there was ever any profit-sharing at Pullman.

## WHEN WILL THE VESTED RIGHTS OF LABOR BE VINDICATED?

The Kansas City Star, in an editorial July 16, says that "one of the lessons of the strike has been a vindication of the vested rights of capital." This brings to mind President Lincoln's famous declaration, in his message to the second session of the Thirty-seventh congress:

Monarchy itself is sometimes hinted at as a possible refuge from the power of the people. . . . It is the effort to place capital on an equal footing with, if not above labor, in the structure of the government.

And capital has been placed above labor in the structure of the government. Labor has no rights to-day that capital is bound to respect. Will the time ever come again in America when the vested rights of labor will be vindicated?

We think one good result of this big strike will be in the curtailment of the extortions and grinding meanness of the Pullman company. Old John Sherman is on the war path and says he has a majority of the senate with him in a proposition to reduce the rates for berths one-half, and he will have a grateful public with him in the fight.—Oskaloosa Independent, July 14.

The above is a fair sample of the conception of republican editors of the proper remedies to be applied for the cure of corporate abuses and corporate tyranny. The reduction of rates for berths has a charm for the millionaires and well-to-do patrons of the Pullman coaches, and in sympathy with these classes the average republican editor is ready to applaud the efforts of John Sherman to insure such reduction. Has anybody heard of John Sherman being "on the war-path" to secure better pay for the men who build the Pullman coaches, or has anybody seen any demand of the republican press for such increase of pay?

GOVERNOR ARTHUR does not seem to know that when Robert E. Lee handed the sword of rebellion to U. S. Grant it was forever settled that the rights of a state are not superior to the power of a nation. Governor Altgeld ought to learn the alphabet of American patriotism.—Acheson Champion, July 12.

And you ought to learn the alphabet of republicanism. Go and read the fourth plank of your national platform of 1860 upon which Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States.